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## Philosophy in Scotland and Scottish education

**James MacAllister & Gale Macleod<sup>1</sup>**

### **Abstract**

*In this paper we consider how philosophy in Scotland has shaped beliefs about Scottish education. We begin by charting Macmurray's views on education generally and Scottish education specifically. We thereafter examine the nature of 'Scottish philosophy' and explore continuities and discrepancies in the thought of Hume, Reid, Davie, MacIntyre, Graham and Macmurray. We suggest that while Davie thought Scottish education should remain true to the Enlightenment tradition of intellectual democracy, Macmurray thought Scottish education should have a new focus, it should seek to develop a more emotionally rational humanity. We conclude that philosophy in Scotland has supplied three main beliefs about Scottish education. First, that education should further conditions of intellectual democracy by supporting students to question social orders and develop the capacities necessary to engage in informed public debate. Second, that in-depth study of different traditions of thought can help further conditions of intellectual democracy. Third, persons can only learn to think well and act morally in relation with other persons and where recognition is given to the necessarily embodied and relational nature of human being and knowing. We claim that even though these beliefs are partly mythological they continue to shape how Scottish education policy is framed today.*

### **Macmurray on Scottish Education and learning to be human**

'To be educated today means to have learned to be human – not Scottish, not British, not even West-European, but human...Scottish education once led the world; it does no longer...Yet Scotland has held to her educational tradition with great tenacity, and it is easy to argue that what was so effective in past generations cannot be fundamentally mistaken now. But this is to forget that in the great days of Scottish education there was a close and effective co-operation between home and church and school...in our time this partnership has been broken' (Macmurray, 2012, p 668)

In 1958 the Scottish philosopher John Macmurray delivered a lecture on education called *Learning to be human* at Moray House in Edinburgh.<sup>1</sup> Though neglected for a long time, this lecture has begun to receive scholarly attention. The lecture was published in a special issue of the Oxford Review of Education (2012) that was devoted to exploring Macmurray's views on education. However, to date, no scholarly attention has been given to the views on *Scottish* education that Macmurray expressed in this lecture. This paper in part aims to address this gap by situating Macmurray's views on Scottish education within wider discourses about philosophy and education in Scotland. Initially we explore Macmurray's views on education. Here we suggest that Macmurray may have influenced the more well known work on Scottish education by George Davie. The bulk of the paper focusses on how philosophy in Scotland has informed beliefs about Scottish education. Here, we firstly consider whether or not there is such a thing as 'Scottish philosophy' as both Davie and MacIntyre claim philosophical ideas developed in the Scottish Enlightenment became central features in Scottish school and university curricula. Secondly, and following Graham, Davie and MacIntyre we consider the possibility that if there is a 'Scottish' philosophy it is more than anything a philosophy of education. We thirdly relate this 'Scottish' philosophy of education to other philosophies of education that have emerged in Scotland and elsewhere, including the one presented by Macmurray. In this section we claim that there is not a *single* Scottish philosophy of education. However, we argue that philosophy with roots in Scotland has supplied three main (partly mythological) beliefs about Scottish education. We suggest these beliefs continue to shape how Scottish education policy is framed today. We conclude that while

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<sup>1</sup> For correspondence please contact James MacAllister (james.macallister@ed.ac.uk) who is a lecturer in the philosophy of education at the University of Edinburgh. Gale Macleod is senior lecturer in education at the University of Edinburgh.

Davie thought Scottish education should remain true to the tradition of intellectual democracy, Macmurray called for it to develop a more emotionally rational humanity.

According to Macmurray education should support persons to learn to be human. Learning to be human entails at least three things: 1) being more than a productive or efficient worker; 2) thinking and feeling from the standpoint of humankind rather than that of Scottish, British or European; 3) living in creative, emotionally alive and thoroughly relational ways. Macmurray suggested that the technical and functional task of preparing pupils for the world of work so dominated the education of his day (the middle of the twentieth century) that the ultimate priority of learning to be human was being neglected. He stated that the 'special training for the world of work by which an individual will earn his living in the social economy... is not the whole of education...it is not even the most important part. It is rather the minimum that an industrial society must demand for efficiency's sake' (Macmurray, 2012, p 672-673). However, a merely efficient society is not a humane and personal one. Macmurray did not think that education should pit nation states (and persons in them) in competition with one another. Instead education should support persons to live together. Education should help persons learn how to think and feel from the standpoint of humankind rather than from a nationalistic perspective. Macmurray thought that Scottish persons were first and foremost *human* rather than Scottish, British, European or Western. Macmurray also suggested that being and becoming human involves leading a creative yet disciplined life in community with others.<sup>ii</sup>

He declared that to 'learn to be human is to learn to be creative. The imaginativeness of children is their birthright: it requires the discipline of the objective world for its training...And the discipline of the imagination cannot be intellectual; it must be rooted...in the life of the senses (Macmurray, 2012, p 672). Macmurray suggested that people first live as *individuals* rather than as *persons*. Individuals are characterized by their dependence on others and by their egocentricity. In contrast, persons are characterized by their capacity to live in interdependent relation with others. Persons have learned how to transcend the human capacity to egocentricity. Young infants are the main example of individualistic existence given by Macmurray, but he appears to have thought that the majority of adults are prone to egocentricity too. However, according to Macmurray egocentricity constitutes a certain perversion of, and failure in, human relations. That is why he thought all persons should experience an education that encouraged them to look beyond their own interests and emotions and outwards towards others. He indicated that education should seek to challenge human self-centredness by promoting *personal relations* - relations that are characterized by a focus on other persons rather than the self. Macmurray felt that education fails when persons take their own feelings and interests to be more important than those of others. He posited not only that educational success is the gradual conquering of egocentricity, but also that emotion education holds the key to the transcending of the human tendency towards dependence and egocentricity. He suggested that a person only fully exists as a *person* when they learn how to unselfishly relate to what is other than and different from them. Learning about human difference requires emotional responsiveness, discipline and creativity. Above all else it requires emotional rationality. According to Macmurray when persons discipline their emotions with rational sensitivity to the world outside of themselves they reveal their full humanity. Education should not then for Macmurray be too functional, bookish, intellectual or specialist. Instead, education should foster a more emotionally rational humanity.<sup>iii</sup>

### **The Scottish school tradition and the Democratic Intellect**

However, in Scotland and elsewhere Macmurray felt education remained too focused on intellectual development and preparation for the world of work. He also felt that the wider community of home and church in Scotland were increasingly unable to provide support to educational institutions in ways they had been able to in the past. He remarked that 'the tendency to specialism and autonomy of specialist activities which is so marked a trend in recent social developments has tended more and more to make people think that the education of their children is the business of schools and universities, and so divest themselves more and more of the responsibilities they increasingly feel unable to perform... But if the Scottish school tradition

were...to cover the whole field of education it would have to submit to a radical reformation. Something has been done, but on the whole the old tradition has remained, with its limitation to the intellectual and bookish aspects of the total task (Macmurray, 2012, p 669). What should be made of these comments about the need for a radical overhaul of the Scottish school tradition? We think one significant aspect of Macmurray's views on Scottish education is that they may have influenced another more well known account of Scottish education, that provided by George Davie. Davie and Macmurray both worked in the philosophy department in Edinburgh. Both philosophers expressed concerns about the impact of specialization on Scottish education. Both philosophers also worried about the future of humanities subjects at Edinburgh. Indeed, when the two philosophers first met in 1946, Macmurray is alleged to have said: 'Davie, the humanities are fighting for their life at Edinburgh, and they're losing the battle' (Macmurray quoted in Costello, 2002, p 307). However, there are important differences in the views of Davie and Macmurray. Macmurray called for a focus on fostering emotional reason rather than intellectual democracy in education. Indeed, Macmurray's philosophy of education has been described as anti-intellectualist (MacAllister, 2014). His remark that the Scottish school tradition was too bookish is probably not one Davie would have agreed with. Davie after all famously lamented the demise of democratic intellectualism in Scottish education.

In his book the *Democratic Intellect*, first published in 1961, (only three years after Macmurray's lecture) George Davie charted the rise and fall in influence of moral philosophy in Scotland's universities in the nineteenth century. It was not just that philosophy was the core subject on the university curriculum in eighteenth and nineteenth century Scotland, he maintained, but also that other subjects were studied in a peculiarly philosophical way. Davie argued that Scotland's philosophical approach to education favoured breadth of focus over narrowness and specialism<sup>iv</sup>. Scottish education was thus distinct from English, which was Davie claimed, much more utilitarian in purpose and less concerned with encouraging students to think philosophically about matters of public importance. The idea that Scottish education did in the eighteenth century encourage students to think in an informed and reasoned manner about common moral philosophical texts and the common good was taken up by Alasdair MacIntyre in his lecture on *The Idea of an Educated Public* (1987). A significant feature of MacIntyre's lecture was that rational debate was not restricted to those in Scotland's universities. Instead the debates within Scottish universities served as a catalyst and enabler of widespread public debate, where the ideas discussed in universities came to reflect, to a large extent, the ideas encountered in public debates about the common good. Davie (2013) and MacIntyre (1987) both claim that a third of parish schoolmasters in eighteenth century Scotland were educated at university with this leading to the situation where the whole of the Scottish school as well as university curriculum was driven by philosophical ideas. It seems eminently possible then that the Scottish school tradition found wanting by Macmurray was the same one later praised by Davie. But did philosophical ideas really permeate school and university curricula in Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment Scotland, and if so, which ones?

### **Is there a 'Scottish' Philosophy?**

'What is it for something to be a piece of Scottish philosophy? Is it sufficient that it is written by a Scot? Or does there have to be something identifiably Scottish about the philosophy itself...?' (Broadie, 2009, p 2)

In his *A History of Scottish Philosophy*, Alexander Broadie asks whether it is legitimate to assert the existence of a specifically *Scottish* philosophy. He answers in the affirmative, reasoning that if it is not problematic to speak of 'national-sounding' philosophical movements like German idealism, British empiricism or American pragmatism then why should it be problematic to sanction the possibility that there is such a thing as Scottish philosophy. Graham (2003) however points out that while the former terms refer to specific doctrines associated with particular geographical areas, the notion of Scottish philosophy does not in itself convey allegiance to any philosophical doctrine, only a country. If there are no identifiable features that unite the work of different Scottish philosophers, Graham wonders if it might make more sense to speak of 'philosophy in Scotland' rather than 'Scottish philosophy'. Becoming clearer about the extent to which Scottish philosophers

share similar preoccupations, forms of argumentation and concepts necessitates consideration of the philosophical ideas that have emerged in Scotland. The scope and diverse terrain covered by philosophers in Scotland is, however, vast. In this paper we therefore only sketch in outline some of the ideas that have typically driven philosophical debate in Scotland. If there is a Scottish philosophy then, who are its main exponents and what unifying concerns and arguments do they have, if any? How, moreover, is Scottish philosophy different from and/or similar to philosophies that have emerged elsewhere?

While the Enlightenment philosophers David Hume and Adam Smith are probably the most well known Scottish philosophers today, this was not always the case. Indeed thinkers belonging to the common sense school of Scottish philosophy led by Thomas Reid were for much of the nineteenth century, at least in North America, significantly more influential than either Hume or Smith (Fleischacker, 2003). Moreover, the notion of a 'Scottish Philosophy' was not one perpetuated by Hume, Reid or Smith in the eighteenth century. The term was rather the invention of three other Scots. Ferrier, Pringle-Pattison and McCosh all employed the label 'Scottish Philosophy' within the titles of their nineteenth century books (Graham, 2003 & Barr, 2008). 'Scottish philosophy' is, according to Graham, thus largely a post-Enlightenment conception that arose less from national self confidence and more from uncertainty about whether or not Scottish philosophy still existed after the eighteenth century. Indeed it has been suggested that there may not have been a specific 'Scottish' Enlightenment (Broadie, 2003). On such a view the Enlightenment is deemed to be a movement of international rather than national character (Broadie, 2003). That the Enlightenment occurred in various national contexts is not in question. Nor would it seem reasonable to hold that thinkers in Scotland developed ideas wholly divorced from and at odds with Enlightenment thinkers elsewhere. However, Davie (1991) MacIntyre (1988) Broadie (2003) and Barr (2008) do maintain that there was something distinctive about the *Scottish* Enlightenment.

Broadie argues that the major figures of the Scottish Enlightenment were also key actors within Scotland's institutions. Actors who were shaped by, and in turn shaped, the distinctive features of Scotland's legal, religious and educational institutions (Broadie, 2003). It is perhaps Davie (2013, 1986) and MacIntyre (1988) though who have spoken at greatest length about how institutions in eighteenth century Scotland differed from those in England and elsewhere. Davie argues that exploration of philosophical ideas by *all* students in Scotland's universities carried on into the twentieth century long after the practice had ceased in England (1986). MacIntyre (1988) meanwhile suggests that after the treaty of union in 1707 Scotland's universities, legal system and church differed from their English counterparts in that they were animated by: a Calvinist theology; a belief that justice rests on more than the right of individuals to pursue their own interests; a view that reason ought to be master of the passions. However, as MacIntyre (1988) points out, students were encouraged to question such beliefs via engagement with the diverse texts of Aristotle, Descartes, Locke and eventually Hume, Smith and Reid. The practice of encouraging students to question important cultural beliefs and engage in 'epistemological conflict' via engagement with philosophical texts from different traditions was vital to the emergence and sustenance of an educated public in Enlightenment Scotland (MacIntyre, 1988). Indeed, contestation of ideas through rational debate with others in universities and debating societies was utterly central to the Scottish Enlightenment (Broadie, 2003, MacIntyre 1987 & 1988). However, it should be stressed that even though Scottish Enlightenment thinkers often came into conflict with each other at the level of ideas they nonetheless maintained 'bonds of friendship'. Epistemological conflict between persons who held different *ideas* thus did not generally entail *personal conflict* in Enlightenment Scotland. Broadie puts it thus: 'the writers were held together by bonds of friendship, they argued and debated with each other, and created many clubs and debating societies to facilitate discussion. This aspect of the Scottish Enlightenment is a crucial feature of it' (Broadie, 2003 p 1).

### **What ideas were debated during the Scottish Enlightenment?**

What philosophical ideas were contested during the Scottish Enlightenment? Perhaps the key clash of ideas occurred between David Hume (2007) and Thomas Reid (2010). Hume

maintained that reason could not deliver sound arguments to support religious belief (Broadie, 2009). In contrast, Hume argued that all human beliefs (including any religious ones) arise almost solely as a result of sense experiences, passions and custom (Broadie 2009). He famously opined that reason is and must be slave of the passions (Hume, 2007). Along with fellow members of the 'common sense school' of Scottish philosophy including Dugald Stewart and Adam Ferguson, Reid in contrast, rejected Humean skepticism (Broadie, 2009). Unlike Hume, Reid and other common sense philosophers, subscribed to a set of first principles that could not be empirically proven but are nonetheless part of human nature. These included 1) belief that 'consciousness' is central to human life generally and scientific inquiries specifically as well as 2) an unflinching faith in a providential God (Klemme 2003, Broadie 2009). Thus Barr's (2008) implication that the Scottish Enlightenment was distinctively Godly should not be taken to mean that all participants in it held faith in God. This is true of Reid and the common sense school but it is not true of Hume, Smith and Hutcheson (Broadie 2009). Even though all these philosophers were concerned with theological questions they did not all reach Godly conclusions. Indeed, we are inclined to think it makes more sense to describe the Scottish Enlightenment as *embodied and relational* rather than *Godly*.

Hume after all held that human persons are active, social *and* reasonable beings (2007) rather than consciously rational beings. Furthermore for Hutcheson, Hume and Smith it is sense experience that furnishes persons with much knowledge of the world (Broadie, 2009). These three philosophers emphasised that on moral matters persons should consult other persons (rather than or at least more than God) for guidance to ensure that we do not act out of self-interest. Hutcheson, Hume and Smith all wrote about the concept of the *spectator* (Broadie, 2009). Broadie explains this concept like so. 'To know whether I have acted well or not, I must consult others who are spectators of my action, for if I consult only myself, and if, as is likely, my judgment is affected by my self-love or self-interest, the judgment will be a distortion of the truth' (2009, p 200). It is significant that spectatorship more often than not involves sympathetic, *relational and embodied* acts of imagination, of trying to see the matter from their point of view, rather than any mere rational consultation. While Barr (2008) credits Hume and Smith with the articulation of embodied philosophies of knowing, she criticises other Scottish thinkers for adopting disembodied and overly analytic epistemologies. Such a view is understandable given the common sense school belief that consciousness drives human life. However, even here it should be noted that both Hume *and* Reid saw themselves as carrying out natural philosophy through observation of things in the world. While Reid and the common sense school focused their inquiries on the human mind, they thought that the human mind could be investigated empirically as it is part of the natural world (Broadie, 2003b).

Barr's declaration that Davie's philosophy is a 'peculiarly disembodied kind of endeavour' (2008, p 98) seems especially wide of the mark though. While Davie is in many respects the twentieth century heir to the common sense school of philosophy developed by Reid, Davie's concept of common sense does not seem at all dis-embodied. He rather integrates aspects of the concept of the spectator into his thoughts on common sense. For Davie common sense not only refers to the pulling together of our five senses to obtain knowledge of the world, it also refers to the fact that persons can think and feel more reliably in communal relation with others. He states that only 'through other individual's recognition of us, and through what they communicate to us, do we become aware of our identity as beings who feel and hear and see etc...Others give us our sense of bodily continuity and, conversely it is only in virtue of the relations obtaining between our senses that we can recognise others as other, i.e. as discrete bodily existences in their own right' (Davie, 1986, p 189). However, two areas where Barr is right to be critical of philosophical scholarship on the Scottish Enlightenment concern the general lack of attention paid to 1) the thought of influential women of the time including Elizabeth Hamilton and Mary Somerville as well as 2) the fact that the development of the Scottish economy during the Enlightenment 'depended hugely on slavery and the spoils of the empire' (Barr 2008, p 135). Barr does a fine job of trying to bring to light these 'forgotten memories'. That scholarship about Scottish philosophy has

sometimes neglected the facts of history is particularly interesting as a succession of Scottish philosophers have taken an avowedly 'historical' approach to philosophy.

### **Common threads in Scottish philosophy**

In considering the question of whether there is a distinctively Scottish philosophy, certain unifying features of the work of different Scottish philosophers have, we hope, emerged. First, Scottish philosophers (including Hume, Hutcheson, Smith and more recently Davie, Macmurray and MacIntyre) have generally endorsed embodied and relational moral and epistemological theories. In so far as this is true of Scotland's Enlightenment thinkers, it seems reasonable to conclude that the Scottish Enlightenment was identifiably different from the more rational continental Enlightenment views of Descartes and Kant. Scottish philosophers have also secondly tended to take a *historical*, rather than 'view from nowhere', approach to their work. Hume first attained fame as a historian and his awareness of history fed into his philosophy (Broadie 2009). Similarly later Scottish philosophers including Macmurray (1956) MacIntyre (1990) and Broadie (2009) all show keen awareness of how contingent historical events shape the development of philosophical thought. A third feature has also characterised Scottish philosophy – a commitment to rational debate about ideas and matters of public importance. Fleischacker remarks that the 'Scots did tend to share some general views – on the sociability of human nature, on the importance of history to moral philosophy and social science, on the dignity and intelligence of ordinary people...But their internal debates matter as much as what was agreed on...one of their great legacies was the model of an intellectual community made up of people who could learn from one another, and remain friends, amid vehement disagreement' (2003, p 333).

Scottish philosophers do seem to have at least some unifying concerns and approaches to philosophising then as well as a commitment to reasoned debate when agreement is not obvious. Embodied and relational theories of being articulated with an awareness of history have of course developed outside of Scotland (for example Levinas, 2006), as have theories of rational dialogue (for example Habermas, 2014). We are not therefore claiming that the work of Scottish philosophers is entirely distinctive from philosophies that emerged elsewhere, or that they have not been influenced by, or influenced philosophical thought from elsewhere. They have. Hume for example took up ideas developed by Descartes and Locke and in turn influenced Kant and later French philosophy (Malherbe, 2003). The ideas of Reid too became especially influential in North America (Fleischacker, 2003). Indeed, such common sense ideas formed a key part of university curricula in nineteenth century America (Barr, 2008). From an educational perspective a fourth prominent concern of Scottish philosophers is perhaps especially interesting – the idea that philosophy should be studied at university so as to inform and enable public debate. Graham (2003) follows Davie and MacIntyre in suggesting that the 'declared and recognized purpose' of studying philosophy at university in Scotland was for public good. He states that 'the public role of philosophy was not to push back the frontiers of knowledge, to engage in...cutting edge research...but to contribute to the education of the minds that would populate the professions' (2003, p 348). Indeed, Graham and Paterson (2003) suggest that if there is still a Scottish philosophy, it is to be found in the particular way that professionals are to be educated at university - with a concern for 'ideas' and theory as well as matters of public importance. It might be concluded then that if there is a Scottish philosophy, it is more than anything a *philosophy of education*. However, there are reasons to doubt that such a Scottish philosophy of education proliferated as widely as proponents of it suggest. Related to this, there are also reasons to doubt whether it is the only philosophy of education to have emerged in Scotland.

### **Is there a Scottish philosophy of education?**

Davie (2013) and MacIntyre (1987) both claim that a third of parish schoolmasters in eighteenth century Scotland were educated at university with this leading to the situation where the whole of the Scottish school as well as university curriculum was driven by philosophical ideas. Others, including Anderson (1983) and Barr (2008) have rightly questioned the historical accuracy

of Davie's account, suggesting that the democratic intellect is a mythological rather than historical narrative. Anderson avers that philosophy did not have the central part in the curriculum that Davie allots it. He also maintains that the myth of the democratic intellect served the interests of the middle classes and rural Scottish population rather than the urban poor. Barr in turn argues that the notion of the democratic intellect driven by Scotland's universities has served to conceal from view the many democratic forms of adult education that emerged in nineteenth century Scotland outwith the formal university system. Perhaps more significantly, Barr also rightly questions how 'democratic' the public institutions (including universities), societies and social movements actually were in Scotland at the turn of the nineteenth century given women were excluded from participation in many of them. The pioneering establishment of a school for the children of factory workers at New Lanark by Robert Owen is also a prime example of a socially democratic educational initiative in Scotland that receives scant attention by Davie and MacIntyre.

Though Owen was a man of action first, rather than a philosopher, he did engage with philosophical ideas in debating societies in Manchester and these ideas seem to have influenced his educational thought and practice (Davis and O'Hagan, 2010). While Owen was Welsh rather than Scottish there is good reason for concluding that he embodied the tradition of democratic intellectualism as much as anyone, committed as he was to bringing his philosophical learning in service of public good by broadening opportunity of access to education. It is also probably significant that he chose to set up his school in Scotland, where practices of educational democracy were more evident than England during the nineteenth century. Though the democratic intellect may be part mythology then, it has been claimed that aspects of the national educational 'myth' retain the potential to mobilise policy and practice, ruling out some developments at least on the grounds that they are inconsistent with the national tradition (Anderson, 1983, Paterson 2003).

'The belief that Scottish education was peculiarly "democratic"...formed a powerful historical myth, using that word to indicate not something false, but an idealization and distillation of a complex reality, a belief which influences history by interacting with other forces and pressures, ruling out some developments as inconsistent with the national tradition, and shaping the form in which the institutions inherited from the past are allowed to change' (Anderson, 1983, p 1)

There may be some truth in this. While the Curriculum for Excellence in Scotland has been criticized for downgrading the importance of traditional subject knowledge (MacAllister et al, 2013) it is nonetheless structured around the idea that all school pupils should undertake a *broad* general phase of education. As we have seen the principle of breadth was very important to Davie's account of education in Scotland's Universities. More pertinently, if the *Importance of Teaching* (2010) and the *Donaldson Review* (2011) are anything to go by, the notion that teachers should be educated at universities, where such teacher education continues to cultivate a concern for ideas and theory as well as practice still holds more mobilising force in Scotland than in England (MacAllister, 2015). Thus it is possible that the very union that a significant minority of Scots wanted to break from via the 2014 referendum on independence may have been the driving force behind the creation of the nation's philosophy of education - however mythological or distinctive that philosophy may be. For without the union in 1707 and the ceding of powers to Westminster on all matters apart from law, church and education there very probably would have been no national need or opportunity to construct a narrative of distinctiveness from England about Scottish education. Nor could this narrative of distinctiveness have been sustained for long without being passed on to students within Scottish educational institutions. Thus it is arguable that the union with England provided philosophers in Scotland with the motive and opportunity to create a philosophy of education that still resonates in diluted and attenuated form in education policy today.

The philosophy of education as democratic intellectualism articulated by Davie and MacIntyre is not the only one to have emerged in Scotland though. As we have seen, John Macmurray argued that education should help persons become more human through a focus on sense experience and acting for the sake of others rather than intellectual content (Macmurray



2012 and MacAllister 2014). A Scot, A S Neill, was also at the vanguard of another educational philosophy (progressivism) in the UK for much of the twentieth century. Neill admittedly set up his progressive school, Summerhill, in England and did not have much positive to say about Scottish Education either (Humes, 2015). However, his work did nonetheless encourage other Scots including Aitkenhead, R F Mackenzie and Hugh Mackenzie to adopt progressive educational philosophies in their respective Scottish schools (Humes, 2015). Furthermore, about the time of Neill, Stanley Nisbett, Professor of Education at the University of Glasgow was endorsing a philosophy of education based upon a wide range of 'practical objectives' including skills, culture, leisure, occupations, citizenship and personal growth (Nisbett, 1957). There is not then in our view a *single* Scottish philosophy of education. However, we do think philosophy in Scotland has supplied three main beliefs about education. First, that education should further conditions of intellectual democracy by supporting students to question social orders and develop the capacities necessary to engage in informed public debate. While the social orders questioned and debated by Scots in the eighteenth century were theological and commercial (MacIntyre, 1988), MacIntyre suggests capitalism (2002 with Dunne) and the massive debt burden on plain persons (MacIntyre 2013) are social orders that should be subject to particular critical questioning and debate today. Second, that in-depth study of different traditions of thought can help further conditions of intellectual democracy. Third, intellectual content and debate are not all there is to education or democracy. Macmurray perhaps wrote most explicitly about this when stressing that education should enable persons to become more human. However, other Scottish philosophers have generally agreed that persons can only learn to think well and act morally in relation with other persons and where recognition is given to the necessarily embodied and relational nature of human being and knowing.

### **Philosophy and education in Scotland**

Are these principles of belief sufficient to suggest that Scottish philosophies and beliefs about education are distinctive from philosophies of education that have emerged elsewhere? We are inclined to think they do. Others may disagree. But if this paper is true to the spirit of *Scottish philosophy* then at the very least we hope it opens up rational debate about the relationship between philosophy and education in Scotland. It seems to us that ideas developed during the Scottish Enlightenment have informed at least two related yet different twentieth century Scottish philosophies of education – those of Macmurray on one hand and Davie and MacIntyre on the other. Macmurray (2012) is perhaps the most explicit heir to Hume and Smith. MacIntyre (1987 & 1999) and Davie (2013 & 1986) are perhaps heirs to Reid - even though they both also stress that human life and learning is necessarily embodied and relational. Of course, the Scottish philosophies of education discussed here were not developed in a vacuum. They have often been driven by a political need to be different from England, as in the case of Davie's democratic intellect. They have generally been informed by theory from elsewhere too. While MacIntyre sought inspiration from Aristotelian texts in his middle period, his early and more recent work draws upon Marxism (Burns 2013 & MacIntyre 2013). Even if he did not agree with them, he also takes seriously the claims of genealogists such as Foucault and Nietzsche (MacIntyre 1990). Macmurray's philosophy of education was also influenced by ideas from the continent – those of Marx, Levinas, and especially Buber (2013). However, Macmurray writes more explicitly about education than either Buber or Levinas - this perhaps makes the general lack of attention paid to him by philosophers of education until recently all the more surprising.

It should be acknowledged too that Newman (1995) advocated a form of university education similar to that articulated by Davie and MacIntyre. However, Newman and later advocates of liberal education did not stress the public debate-enabling role that philosophy should play in education to the same extent as Davie and MacIntyre. While the differences between Scottish and English educational thought and practice have no doubt been exaggerated for political reasons, we do not think the Scottish educational philosophies discussed here can be readily reduced to other influential philosophies of education such as the liberal analytic tradition generally associated with Hirst and Peters (1975) or Deweyan pragmatism (2007). Regarding the former tradition, MacIntyre (1988 & 1999) and Macmurray (1956 & 2012) both shunned the label of analytic philosopher and sought to develop philosophies of education that acknowledge the

necessarily contingent, historic and embodied nature of human life and thought. MacIntyre (1990 & 2002 with Dunne) also stressed that educational institutions should encourage students to engage in practices of debate and conflict within traditions of thought *and* between traditions of thought in a way that Peters and the early Hirst did not. Regarding the pragmatic tradition, there are no doubt similarities between the educational thought of Macmurray and for example, Dewey. However, Macmurray was no pragmatist. He insisted that *personal* life should not be compared with *social* life precisely because personal interactions with others are worthwhile in themselves (MacAllister & Thorburn 2014). Furthermore, while Dewey thought pupil interest should drive democratic education MacIntyre and Davie thought traditions of knowledge should and for the purpose of improving the substance of public debate as well as the common good.

In sum we think the question of how philosophy with roots in Scotland has informed beliefs about Scottish education is important for three reasons. First, even though the three beliefs about Scottish education that we have outlined are partly mythological they continue to shape how Scottish education policy is framed today. The most obvious examples of this are the recent shift to the general education phase in Scottish school education as well as the continued stress on theory within Scottish teacher education. Second, it has been too little acknowledged that Scottish philosophical thought about education cannot be entirely equated with philosophies of education that have developed elsewhere in England, the US or mainland Europe. No other thinkers on education have stressed that education should aim to facilitate informed public debate about common texts and the common good in the way and to the extent that MacIntyre and Davie have. Third, though the tradition of democratic intellectualism has perhaps been most influential in policy and practice, other philosophical ideas about education have emerged in Scotland too. In this respect we have focused on highlighting Macmurray's views on Scottish education, as they have until now been neglected. We have tried to show that although Macmurray may have influenced Davie's thinking about Scottish education, he also called for a radical restructuring of Scottish education. Davie argued that education in Scotland should remain true to the Enlightenment tradition of intellectual democracy. Macmurray in contrast argued that education in Scotland should have a new focus, it should seek to develop a more emotionally rational humanity. Since the time of Macmurray's lecture nearly sixty years ago, there has been a significant policy and practice turn in Scotland towards educating for the wellbeing of the whole person. The curriculum for excellence now seeks to develop the personhood of students in four ways: as successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens. While Macmurray may have welcomed some of these developments it is equally likely that he would have continued to lament the lack of real humanity generally engendered by education. It is also questionable whether he would identify the current curriculum as too focused on intellectual development as he believed of the curriculum in 1958.

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<sup>i</sup> Moray House was in 1958 one of the main teacher education colleges in Scotland. It continues to educate teachers today but is now called the Moray House School of Education and is part of the University of Edinburgh.

<sup>ii</sup> For further analysis of Macmurray's views on creativity and emotion education see McIntosh (2015).

<sup>iii</sup> For further discussion of how Macmurray defended the need for education to develop the emotional rationality of persons see MacAllister (2014)

<sup>iv</sup> For a more comprehensive analysis of Davie's philosophy see Paterson (2015).

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